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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2007

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Attorney General Darrell McGraw and Secretary of State Betty Ireland Sponsor Constitution and Citizenship Day Contest

Charleston – Attorney General Darrell McGraw and Secretary of State Betty Ireland today announced a Constitution and Citizenship Day Contest for all West Virginia high school seniors in public or private schools, or those being home schooled who will graduate during the 2007-2008 school year.

Constitution and Citizenship Day is a federal holiday that recognizes the ratification of the United States Constitution. It is observed on September 17, the day the U. S. Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution in 1787. The law establishing the holiday was created in 2004 with the passage of an amendment by Senator Robert Byrd to the Omnibus spending bill of 2004. In addition to renaming the holiday “Constitution Day and Citizenship Day,” the act mandates that all publicly funded educational institutions provide educational programming on the history of the American Constitution on that day. When Constitution Day falls on a weekend or on another holiday, schools and other institutions unofficially observe the holiday on an adjacent weekday.

“Our aim is to foster a greater interest in, and understanding of, the principles set forth in the United States Constitution and to assist in compliance with the provisions of federal law,” stated Attorney General McGraw.

“We have prepared a study guide on the United States Constitution and an accompanying test covering matters contained in the study guide. The test will be available for taking online September 17 and 18,” stated Attorney General McGraw.

The study guide became available on the Attorney General’s at www.wvago.gov on Friday, September 7, 2007.

“To spur interest in the test, and hopefully the Constitution, a new notebook computer will be awarded to a participating senior in each of our 55 counties. To be eligible to win a senior must take the test and attain a score of 20 (100%). In the event that more than one student so scores, a winner will be drawn at random from the students scoring 100% in each county,” stated Attorney General McGraw.

The availability of these computers is made possible due to the settlement of a lawsuit several years ago with the Microsoft Corporation. Part of the settlement gave the office of the Attorney General vouchers for computer hard ware and soft ware to be used at the Attorney General’s discretion in a manner consistent with the settlement agreement. Microsoft has graciously agreed to the use in this contest.

As part of the holiday observance and consistent with the “citizenship” portion of the program, Secretary Ireland’s staff has prepared voter registration information packets for eligible seniors to encourage their participation in the electoral process. Her

staff is available to answer any question about registration or provide additional forms, if necessary. Students can easily register to vote at Secretary Ireland's web page www.wvvote.com.

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